

Section 6: Service Providers and Community Partners

A. Overview

Service providers and community partners are essential allies in keeping Oregon children safe. Service providers assist families by offering treatment programs that help a parent increase his or her parental protective capacity and overcome barriers that prevent the parent from being a safe resource for his or her child. In addition, service providers provide Child Welfare and the courts with information regarding a parent's attendance and progress in treatment. Service providers also help children heal after suffering abuse and neglect. Community partners assist families by providing options and opportunities for children and parents to develop safe and healthy relationships. Community partners assist Child Welfare by providing information about a family to help caseworkers and the courts make informed decisions about the family.

B. Confidentiality

Much of the information about an individual family in a Child Welfare case file is confidential under state and federal law. The caseworker must protect family information and ensure that service providers and community partners also keep the information confidential. When working with community partners and service providers, the caseworker will:

- Obtain a signed authorization from the parent prior to discussing confidential information with a service provider or community partner. The form DHS 2099, found at: <http://dhsforms.hr.state.or.us/Forms/Served/DE2099i.pdf>, must be properly completed by the caseworker and signed by the parent so that Child Welfare is authorized to share information with the service provider or community partner and the provider or partner is authorized to share information with Child Welfare.
- Obtain a signed authorization from the parent allowing Child Welfare to disclose information provided to Child Welfare by a service provider or community partner to the court, all parties to the juvenile court proceeding and their attorneys, and the Citizen Review Board.
- Remind all community partners and service providers to keep confidential the information disclosed by the caseworker or discussed at any:
 1. Child Safety Meeting.
 2. Oregon Family Decision Meeting.
 3. Family Decision Meeting.
 4. Protective Capacity Assessment.

See Chapter I, Section 4 for more detailed information on Confidentiality.

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C. Legal Issues

It is important to remember that although Child Welfare caseworkers work closely with community partners and service providers, these people are not parties to the family's case and, as such, are not entitled to discovery that is provided to parties to the juvenile court case. There are times when the caseworker may provide specific case file information to a provider, such as providing a psychologist with a copy of the parent's drug and alcohol assessment, but the caseworker must be sure that there is a properly completed authorization signed by the parent permitting the disclosure or that the disclosure of information is otherwise legally authorized.

Service providers and community partners may be served with a subpoena to a juvenile court hearing as a witness because the provider worked with a family member. If the provider is served with a subpoena and contacts the caseworker with a question, the caseworker will:

- Refer the provider to the provider's own legal counsel.
- Refer the provider to the DDA, AAG, or other attorney that issued the subpoena.

Parents may request services prior to the jurisdiction hearing on the petition filed on behalf of their child. If the parents make such a request, the caseworker:

- Encourages the parent to consult with his or her attorney before starting services.
- Refers the parent to services that are appropriate to help improve the parent's protective capacity and that are rationally related to alleviating the conditions which are alleged in the petition to have endangered the child.
- Have the parent sign a release of information allowing Child Welfare to provide information regarding the parent to the provider, to receive information about the parent from the provider, and to disclose information received from the provider to the court, the parties to the juvenile court case and their attorneys, and the Citizen Review Board.
- Documents conversations with the parent in a case note in FACIS.

If the parent chooses not to participate in services prior to the jurisdiction hearing, the caseworker:

- Documents the conversation with the parent in a case note in FACIS.
- Recommends in the court report that the caseworker prepares for the disposition hearing that the court order the parent to participate in services that bear a rational relationship to the allegations in the petition that were admitted or proven. See Section 1.A.5. of this chapter on court reports.

D. Team players

Service providers and community partners are important team members to the family and Child Welfare. Service providers give valuable information to the caseworker on the parent's attendance and progress in treatment and provide updates on the parent's increased protective capacity. It is important for the caseworker to:

- Discuss with the parents any people in the community who have knowledge of the parent and can contribute to the Protective Capacity Assessment.
- Invite the service providers and any community partners identified by the parent to:
 1. Child Safety Meetings.
 2. Oregon Family Decision Meetings.
 3. Family Decision Meetings.
- Invite other service providers and community partners who may also have valuable information and can help identify needs of the child and the parent to the above-listed meetings.
- List service providers and community partners working with the family in FACIS under the resources tab, including names, addresses and phone numbers.
- Document phone conversations with service providers and community partners in case notes in FACIS.



Role of the Supervisor

- Ensures caseworkers are knowledgeable regarding confidentiality rules and laws, particularly those related to providing information to community partners and service providers.
- Encourages caseworkers to gain information about local service providers and community partners.
- Encourages caseworkers to develop professional working relationships with service providers and community partners who are working with Child Welfare families.
- Ensures caseworkers document partner and provider information in the case file information on FACIS.

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Legal References

- DHS Child Welfare Policy I-A.3.1 Confidentiality of Client Information
http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-a31.pdf



Forms

- DHS 2099, Authorization for Release of Information
<http://dhsforms.hr.state.or.us/Forms/Served/DE2099.pdf>